



Project Team

Congestion Relief & Bus Rapid Transit Projects

I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Projects Kirkland Nickel Project

Scoping Report

**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

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Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in this Report

Acronym or Abbreviation	Meaning
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
BRT	bus rapid transit
DCE	Documented Categorical Exclusion
DR	discipline report
EB	eastbound
EEI	Early Environmental Investments
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPM	Environmental Procedures Manual
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Agency
GIS	Geographic Information System
GP	general-purpose
HOT	high-occupancy toll
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
HPA	High Probability Area (for cultural, historic and archaeological resources)
HPA	Hydraulic Project Approval
IP	Implementation Plan
KAC	Kirkland Advisory Committee
KC	King County
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOMMI	Manual of Mitigation Measure Implementation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NB	northbound
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMTP	Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
ROD	Record of Decision

Acronym or Abbreviation	Meaning
RTID	Regional Transportation Investment District
SB	southbound
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SPUI	Single Point Urban Interchange
WB	westbound
WDFW	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is Scoping?

In preparing the environmental documents for the I-405 Project, WSDOT uses the term “scoping” to refer to the process of defining the content, or scope, of the document. We use scoping to determine the alternatives to be considered as well as the environmental issues and topics that need to be evaluated in the document. In summary, scoping includes identifying the range of proposed actions, alternatives, environmental elements and impacts, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in an environmental document.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this report is to provide the public, tribes, federal, state, and local agencies, and members of the I-405 Project Team with information that will help define the content, or scope, of the environmental documents being prepared for the Kirkland Nickel Project. A scoping meeting for tribes, federal, state, and local agencies was held during the daytime on January 27, 2004. A scoping meeting for the public was also held on January 27 between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. A legal notice for the public scoping meeting was published two weeks before the meeting, stating that WSDOT would receive scoping comments through March 1, 2004. In addition to the legal notice, WSDOT sent a newsletter to residences and businesses within the project vicinity, informing them of the scoping meeting and comment deadline.

Comments from the public and agencies were reviewed by members of the I-405 Project Team. Individuals attending the public scoping meeting were encouraged to provide written scoping comments on forms provided at the meeting or in another format of their choice. Members of the I-405 Project Team also spoke with the public and recorded their comments. Responses to both written and oral public comments are included in this report. Responses to comments were made orally by members of the I-405 Project Team at the agency scoping meeting. The minutes of that meeting are included in this report.

1.3 Background

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) joined with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit), King County, and local governments to develop strategies to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility in the Interstate 405 (I-405) corridor from Tukwila in the south to Lynnwood in the north. Those strategies were documented in the I-405 Corridor Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) were prepared in accordance with applicable requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and their implementing regulations. The Final EIS noted that: “Subsequent NEPA and SEPA environmental analysis, documentation, and review will enable decisions regarding site-specific, project-level details on alignments, high-capacity transit technology, project impacts, costs, and mitigation measures.”

To advance the long-term implementation of the Selected Alternative (referred to as the Master Plan), the I-405 Environmental Team is tasked with conducting specific environmental analyses for component projects of the I-405 Corridor Program. The

Environmental Team will document these analyses and prepare environmental documentation for the specific corridor projects. Information in the Final EIS and other corridor environmental documents will be referenced and incorporated into the project-level analysis to the maximum extent possible. Decisions reached in the previous corridor EIS and ROD will not be revisited.

In 2003, the Washington State Legislature approved a statewide transportation-funding plan called the “nickel package.” The nickel package provided funding for congestion relief projects in three critical traffic hotspots along the I-405 corridor: Renton, Bellevue, and Kirkland. The Nickel Projects are the first step toward implementation of the long-range I-405 Master Plan.

Environmental deliverables for the I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Projects include environmental discipline reports (DRs), technical memoranda, and NEPA documents for the following transportation improvement projects:

- South Renton/Tukwila (Nickel and Implementation Plan)
- North Renton (Implementation Plan)
- Bellevue (Nickel and Implementation Plan)
- Kirkland (Nickel and Implementation Plan)

In addition, documents will be prepared which support regulatory compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and permitting requirements of other regulatory agencies. Finally, permit applications will be developed for an early action environmental program. These applications will have a watershed-based approach, will emphasize implementation prior to construction, and will promote opportunities for partnering.

1.4 Kirkland Nickel Project Description

The Kirkland Nickel Project generally extends from approximately the on- off-ramps on the north side of the I-405 interchange with SR 520, along the I-405 corridor, and ends at approximately the on- off-ramps on the south side of the I-405 interchange with SR 522.

Since the proposed improvements are not uniform throughout the project area, the project description has been broken down into geographic units that can be easily identified while driving along I-405. The following project description has been written as if the reader is first driving northbound on I-405 from the interchange with SR 520 to the interchange with SR 522 and then turns around and drives southbound back to the interchange with SR 520. The description indicates the number of general-purpose (GP) lanes and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in each road segment. Measures to treat and detain stormwater are under development at this time.

Table 1-1: Traveling Northbound

Limits	Improvements
North of SR 520 interchange to NE 70th Street	None – Existing to remain (3 GP + 1 HOV).
NE 70th Street to NE 85th Street	Transportation Features: Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed) to I-405. The existing drop lane from the NE 70th Street off-ramp will become a through lane. The pavement may be widened to the outside in select areas to provide vehicle emergency refuge areas. The existing bridges over NE 85th Street will remain unchanged. The additional lane will be accommodated over these bridges by re-striping, resulting in narrow lanes and shoulders.
NE 85th Street to NE 116th Street	Transportation Features: Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed) to I-405. The existing pavement will be widened by 10 to 12 feet to the outside beginning at the northbound (NB) on-ramp from NE 85th Street. For improvements to the 116th interchange, see 'Interchanges' below. Design Option: The existing noise wall just north of the NB on-ramp from 85th could remain in place with a non-standard shoulder width.
NE 116th Street interchange	Transportation Features: Reconstruct the 116th Street interchange into a single point urban interchange (SPUI). This option would construct the complete interchange according to the I-405 Implementation Plan, accommodate the Nickel widening, and correct the existing non-standard crest vertical curve on I-405. Design elements would include: (1) Reconstruct the I-405 bridge over 116th Street at the Implementation Plan horizontal and vertical location. Bridge would be built to Nickel width and require simple widening to complete the main line Implementation Plan. (2) Reconstruct the NB off-ramp and SB on-ramp as Implementation Plan ramps. No additional ramp work would be necessary for the Implementation projects. (3) Widen NE 116th Street from 1,700 feet west to 900 feet east of I-405 to accommodate dual-turn entrance and exit ramps. (4) Reconstruct the NE 116th Street bridge over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway. (5) Reconstruct the 120th/116th intersection to accommodate an additional eastbound (EB) through lane on NE 116th Street, and improve turning radii at corners.
NE 116th Street to NE 124th Street	Transportation Features: The additional general-purpose lane added approaching from the south would become a drop lane (exit only) at NE 124th Street. The existing pavement will be widened by up to 10 feet to the outside. North of the NE 124th Street off-ramp, the roadway will remain as 3 GP + 1 HOV.
NE 124th Street to SR 522	None – Existing to remain (3 GP + 1 HOV).

Table 1-2: Traveling Southbound

Limits	Improvements
SR 522 to NE 160th Street	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The additional lane will connect to the existing merge lane from the eastbound SR 522 connector. The existing pavement will be widened up to 12 feet to the outside.
NE 160th Street to NE 124th Street	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The Kirkland Nickel Project ties into the proposed NE 128th Street HOV Direct Connect Project. The existing pavement will be widened 10 to 12 feet to the outside from 160th to approximate station 9340+00, where the widening shifts to the inside (10 to 12 feet). The project will tie into the proposed NE 128th Street Direct HOV Access Project. <u>Design Option 1:</u> Reconstruct the southbound (SB) on-ramp from NE 160th Street. <u>Design Option 2:</u> Minimal SB on-ramp reconstruction. The existing noise wall on top of the barrier along the roadway shoulder on the SB on-ramp could remain in place with non-standard lane and shoulder widths.
NE 124th Street to NE 116th Street	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The project will tie into the proposed NE 128th Street Direct HOV Access Project. For improvements to the 116th interchange, see 'Interchanges' below.
NE 116th Street to NE 85th Street	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The existing pavement will be widened by 10 to 12 feet to the outside. The existing bridges over NE 85th Street will remain unchanged. The additional lane will be accommodated over these bridges by re-striping, resulting in narrow lanes and shoulders.
NE 85th Street to NE 70th Street	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The existing pavement will be widened by 10 to 12 feet to the outside. <u>Design Option 1 (not shown):</u> The existing noise wall on top of the barrier along the roadway shoulder between the pedestrian bridge (south of 85th) and the SB to 70th off-ramp could remain in place with a non-standard shoulder width.
NE 70th Street to SR 520	<u>Transportation Features:</u> Add one general-purpose lane (4 GP + 1 HOV when completed). The existing pavement will be widened by 10 to 12 feet to the outside. The additional lane will tie into the existing add lane for connecting to the SR 520 interchange. <u>Design Option 1:</u> The existing noise wall on top of the barrier along the roadway shoulder at the end of 70th to SB on-ramp could remain in place with a non-standard shoulder width.

1.5 Organization of the Responses to Comments

Three types of comments were collected for this scoping report: written comments submitted either at the public scoping meeting or sent in during the scoping period, verbal comments made to members of the I-405 Project Team at the public scoping meeting, and questions or statements made by agency representatives at the agency scoping meeting. In Section 2 of this report, we printed the written comments and comments from the public scoping meeting with code numbers to identify individual comments. For example, in the submittal from the individual identified as "Commenter 2," we found seven different comments. We highlighted each of the comments with a vertical line on the left-hand side of the page and added a code number for each

comment (e.g., 2-1, 2-2, ... 2-7). In Section 3, we provided responses to each comment using the same code numbers to link the responses to the comments.

Section 4 presents the minutes from the scoping meeting held during the day for public agencies on January 27, 2004. The I-405 Project Team presented the same project plans and graphics that were used at the evening public scoping meeting to provide the public agencies with information about the project. The minutes from the agency scoping meeting include questions and comments from the agencies and the responses provided by the I-405 Project Team.

Many of the comments we received mentioned the same topics such as noise, water quality, stormwater management, and the need for the project. Rather than repeating the same answer, we have referred the reader back to an earlier response that addressed the same comment.